

Message Text

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE POSS DUPE

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61

ACTION OES-04

INFO OCT-01 AF-06 EUR-12 IO-10 ISO-00 ACDA-05 CIAE-00

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 EB-07 NRC-05 DODE-00 FEA-01

COME-00 PA-01 USIA-06 PRS-01 SP-02 PM-04 SS-15 ERDA-05

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R 141320Z NOV 75

FM AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3169

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

USMISSION IAEA VIENNA

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE PRETORIA 4364

DEPT PASS ERDA

E.O.11652: N/A

TAGS: ENRG, SF

SUBJECT: SA MINISTER OF MINES DISCUSSES URANIUM ENRICHMENT PLANT

1. BEGIN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE. SUMMARY. SA MIN MINES STATES COMMERCIAL URANIUM ENRICHMENT PLANT WILL BE BUILT USING SA SECRET ENRICHMENT PROCESS. STRESSING PROJECT ENTIRELY PEACEFUL, HE INDICATED WILLINGNESS TO ACCEPT, UNDER CONDITIONS, INSPECTION. WELCOMED FOREIGN PARTICIPATION. ULTIMATE SIZE OF PLANT TO BE DECIDED IN 1978; BECOMING OPERATIONAL IN 1984. END SUMMARY. END LIMITED OFFICIAL USE.

2. BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED. IN PRESS STATEMENT RELEASED NOV 12, SA MINISTER OF MINES KOORNHOF REAFFIRMED SAG PLANS TO GO AHEAD WITH COMMERCIAL SIZED URANIUM ENRICHMENT FACILITY USING SECRET SOUTH AFRICAN ENRICHMENT PROCESS.

3. FIRST STEP WILL BE COMPLETION OF PILOT PLANT AT VALINDABA (NEXT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
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TO PELINDABA) IN EARLY 1976. FIRST PART OF THIS PLANT PUT INTO SUCCESSFUL OPERATION LAST APRIL OPERATION LAST APRIL AS ANNOUNCED

AT THAT TIME BY PRIMIN VORSTER.

4. KOORNHOF NOTED THAT SAG, BOTH ON ITS OWN AND LATER IN COOPERATION WITH "AUTHORITATIVE FOREIGN CONCERNS" HAD MADE POSSIBILITY STUDIES INDICATING THE PROCESS WILL BE COMPETITIVE WITH ALL ENRICHMENT PROCESSES, EITHER ALREADY APPLIED OR IN ADVANCED STAGE OF DEVELOPMENT.

5. AFTER STRESSING INCREASING IMPORTANCE OF NUCLEAR POWER USING ENRICHED FUEL AND SA POSITION AS MAJOR WORLD SUPPLIER OF URANIUM, KOORNHOF ANNOUNCED SAG WOULD GO AHEAD WITH CONSTRUCTION FULL SCALE PLANT BUT DECISION ON SIZE WOULD NOT BE MADE UNTIL 1978. WITH PLANT BECOMING OPERATIONAL IN 1984 AND AT FULL CAPACITY IN 1986. NO MAJOR EXPENDITURES FOR EQUIPMENT TO BE MADE UNTIL 1978. HE SAID FACTORS DETERMINING SIZE WOULD BE ENRICHMENT SITUATION, CONTRACTS CONCLUDED AND ECONOMIC CONDITIONS THEN PREVAILING.

6. KOORNHOF STRESSED PROJECT SOLELY DIRECTED TO PEACEFUL USES OF ATOMIC ENERGY. SAG, HE EMPHASIZED, IS PREPARED TO SUBJECT THE ENVISAGED PLANT TO SYSTEM OF GUARANTEES INCLUSIVE OF INSPECTION PROVIDED IT DOES NOT INTERFERE WITH NORMAL EFFECTIVE OPERATION OF PLANT AND EVEN OF GREATER IMPORTANCE PROVIDED IT DOES NOT CREATE DANGER FOR SA THAT SENSITIVE DETAILS OF ITS PROCESS LEAK OUT AND BE MISUSED. LATTER, HE SAID, IS "RESPONSIBILITY WHICH SA HAS VIS-A-VIS THE WORLD COMMUNITY AND WHICH IT WILL UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES IGNORE."

7. HE ALSO STATED SAG PREPARED TO SHARE BENEFITS ITS ENRICHMENT PROCESS WITH FRIENDLY COUNTRIES SUBJECT TO CONDITIONS PROTECTING SA INTERESTS. FOREIGN PARTICIPATION IN BOTH DEVELOPMENT AND CONSTRUCTION PHASES WELCOMED TO MAKE IT A MULTINATIONAL VENTURE FOR ALL CONCERNED. NEGOTIATIONS WITH FOREIGN FIRMS ALREADY UNDERWAY BUT BECAUSE OF COMPLEXITY ARE PROTRACTED. END UNCLASSIFIED.

8. BEGIN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE. ROUX, PRESIDENT OF SA ATOMIC ENERGY BOARD, HAS TOLD AMBASSADOR PROJECT WILL BE DESIGNED ON MODULAR BASIS SO AS TO GEAR CAPACITY TO PREVAILING CONDITIONS. AMONG THESE HE MENTIONED MARKET FOR ENRICHED URANIUM, GENERAL ECONOMIC CONDITIONS AND AMOUNT OF INFLATION IN CONSTRUCTION COSTS DURING THE 1978-86 PERIOD. END LIMITED OFFICIAL USE.

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9. BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED. LOCAL PRESS FRONT PAGED STATEMENT NOV 13 AND QUOTING "OVERSEAS SOURCES" PUT COST OF 5000 TON PLANT AT LEASE ONE MILLION RAND (\$1.15 MILLION). END UNCLASSIFIED. BOWDLER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: URANIUM, CONSTRUCTION, NUCLEAR POWER PLANTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 14 NOV 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: ElyME
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975PRETOR04364
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750398-0149
From: PRETORIA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19751141/aaaabksp.tel
Line Count: 110
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION OES
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ElyME
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 02 APR 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <02 APR 2003 by ShawDG>; APPROVED <22 OCT 2003 by ElyME>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SA MINISTER OF MINES DISCUSSES URANIUM ENRICHMENT PLANT
TAGS: ENRG, SF
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006